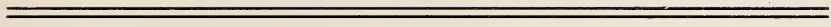


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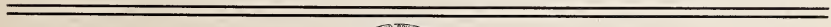
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THOS. D. TUTTLE, M. D., Secretary

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OF INTEREST TO PARENTS AND TEACHERS.

In a former bulletin we have had something to say on the subject of school sanitation. We publish herewith an article by a well-known physician, one highly respected by every physician in the state of Montana.

Dr. King is not a health officer, nor a member of the Board of Health, so his ideas are the ideas of a physician without regard to public health work, other than as every physician is interested in the protection of the public health.

This article by Dr. King so interested one gentleman, not a physician, present at the public health meeting, that he asked for a copy of same, and has sent a copy to every school teacher in his county, offering three prizes for the three best papers written by school teachers in that county, suggesting ways and means by which the ends suggested in this paper might be reached.

Is there only one man in Montana who is public-spirited enough to take active part in the preservation of the health of the school children of our state?

MEDICAL INSPECTION OF SCHOOL CHILDREN.

By Dr. Geo. W. King.

(Read at the Public Health Meeting, at Helena, Jan. 22, 1908.)

The State Board of Health is doing a good work in their efforts to control contagious diseases and at the same time educate the people along the lines leading to the preservation of health. There is another field of usefulness which I trust they will not hesitate to cultivate. I refer to the medical inspection of our schools. The sanitation of the school room, the school life of the child as it exists today, should be subjected to the closest scrutiny by those competent to determine whether the conditions favorable to health, to normal growth and development, are complied with in the process of training to which our children are subjected in the public schools of the state. The hygiene of the developing period of every child should be in competent hands, for during this time must be laid the foundation of health and mental soundness. The wonderful activity of nerve and tissue cells, the plastic brain, does not permit the bearing of heavy burdens or severe mental strain. Given a normal

healthy child we have a right to expect that he will pass on through his school life with no hindrance to his growth or development, and at its close possess the full vigor of manhood, both physical and mental. As a matter of fact such a desirable result is often wanting. The student is left with impaired health, he does not possess the information that he is supposed to have, he lacks the mental discipline his course of study implies, and we are left in doubt as to the efficiency of a system which records so many failures.

The education of the child is an intricate problem; whether it will ever be satisfactorily solved I know not. One thing is certainly obvious, and that is the adoption of an inflexible standard in the different grades cannot do justice to all. In a class of 30 to 40 children at or nearly the same age, there are as many phases of mental development as there are individuals, the clever, the average, the dull, are brought together and made to go through the same routine. To one the task may be nothing more than good healthful exercise, to another it means much labor, while to a third it becomes impossible and his life is made miserable by the constant struggle to keep in touch with his fellows. In all three the material is there for successful work. It is simply the difference in the unfolding of the intellect. The slow, sensitive child, rebuked by his teacher, subject to parental criticism at home, has indeed a wearisome path to travel. It would be infinitely better for him to be left to his own resources to gather what he could from actual life, than to be dwarfed in mind and body by the attempt to force work upon him beyond his power of comprehension. These pupils require the sympathy and personal assistance of the teacher, especially at the beginning. There is a growing tendency to put too much work upon the child, getting beyond his mental calibre. A task which may seem quite simple to the instructor is often quite the opposite to the child. It must be explained to him step by step in language which he can understand, and not in the profunctory phrases of the pedagogue, which is practically a foreign language to him.

Too many subjects of little or no importance (side issues, so to speak) are introduced into the course, all requiring more or less mental effort. The thousand and one things that the child

will find out for himself in a year or two might well be left out, as also much of the senseless grind in the attempt to memorize page after page of history. It is not worth while to tire the child's brain by a study of what some wicked old ruler did centuries ago. Most of us, the recent graduate as well, consult our reference books when historical questions are presented. To encumber the brain of the child by the study of dead and forgotten things, when there is so much more in the active world around us to stimulate mental growth, seems an absurdity. The lesson which interests the child makes an indelible impression on the plastic brain and this is memory. All the brain tracts or centres which receive sensory impressions by the medium of the so-called five senses are capable of being strengthened and developed by daily moderate and intelligent exercise. Fatigue is fatal to memory, fatal to any consistent mental work.

Educators in preparing text books and formulating the courses of the intermediate and primary grades apparently lose sight of the fact that the power to fix and hold the attention upon a given object is very slight in children; at the age of 10 years 10 minutes is probably the average, above which it is not profitable to go. If the effort is continued the brain wearies and fails to receive the impressions. Giving the child too many studies and exacting too much thoroughness at a tender age is the too common practice under the so-called improved methods.

A recent writer, comparing the curriculum of the fourth grade of one of the public schools as adopted in 1888, finds in the same grade in 1907 advanced requirements with an increased number of branches, while at the same time there is no evidence to prove that a child of 10 years is any further advanced in mental development than one of the same age in 1888. This indicates to what we are tending, and explains the reason why we are confronted with so many nervous children who lack symmetrical development. Any system of training which induces constant mental tension must be looked upon with suspicion. Should the child return home at the close of the school day nervous, restless, unable to turn eagerly to his play as a normal child does, there is something wrong; the cause must be ascertained and existing errors rectified. Rarely a term passes but it becomes my painful duty to say to some parent,

"You must take your child out of school; otherwise his health will be permanently ruined." This extreme could have certainly been avoided had the instructor and the parents been less rigid in their exactions. We should aim to so perfect our schools that not only the strong may be permitted to retain their strength, but the weak also may be strengthened and regenerated. This does not mean that we should turn our schools into an infirmary, but it does mean that we shall not impose a task upon any pupil greater than they can bear with safety and with profit.

Instead of making the courses of study in our schools more difficult and complex it should be simplified, eliminating the marking system and the stated examinations, for they are a menace to the child and productive of no good. The teacher who cannot tell the standing of each member of his class is an exception. Home study should not be made a necessity; the ordinary school session is sufficient for the day. Whenever I see a pale anemic student hurrying homeward with an armful of books, anxious concerning the lesson for the morrow, my burden of sympathy goes out to him and I arraign a system which permits such things to stand. Good health is the prerequisite of successful mental work in child or adult. Abundant supply of healthy blood to the brain is a prime essential for intelligent mental work.

The laws of health are few and simple, familiar to all, viz: proper nourishment, clothing, fresh air and sunshine, work, rest, recreation, sleep. Bearing this in mind, what shall we say of a school session beginning at 8:30 a. m. and continuing until 1:30 p. m. without intermission? The student is hurried from the breakfast table and to the school room to begin the day's work under the most unfavorable conditions. In the rush and excitement incident to getting ready for school they are rarely able to partake of a substantial meal, an omission harmful in the extreme. Before the session is half over they suffer from hunger and are unable to fix their attention upon anything, profitable work being out of the question. The teachers are also laboring under the same unhygienic practice. A tired and hungry pupil, a tired and hungry teacher, cannot do anything worth doing, and inevitably all concerned must suffer in general health.

I do not know by whose dictation such an arbitrary division of the school session was made. I speak of it to condemn it. We boast of our public schools and to a certain extent have a right to do so, yet we may learn much of older countries. In France, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Norway, Switzerland, every

pupil is subject to medical inspection every ten days, to note any physical or mental defect, the state of the general health, and everything which pertains to his welfare, both mental and physical. The children of the very poor are cared for by the state, and as a result they turn out from their schools sturdy men and women, instead of neurotics, men and women with poise and vigor, well equipped for the battle of life. I have no disposition to criticize our methods even for a minute. I speak in behalf of the children, in the hope that the State Board of Health will become interested sufficiently to take some action looking toward the proper medical inspection of our public schools.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES REPORTED FOR THE MONTH OF JANUARY, 1908.

SMALLPOX—Cases of smallpox were reported as follows: Jefferson 2; Lewis and Clark 1 (in Helena, imported from California); Missoula 6 (5 in Missoula City, one imported); Park 4; Sanders 2; Silver Bow 3 (1 in Butte); total 18; total last month 13; total last January 2.

DIPHTHERIA—Cases of diphtheria were reported as follows: Custer 5; Dawson 6; Fergus 6; Flathead 14; Gallatin 1; Jefferson 3; Lewis and Clark 4 (2 in Helena); Madison 3; Missoula 9 (6 in Missoula City); Park 4 (3 in Livingston, 2 imported); Powell 3; Sanders 6; Silver Bow 14 (11 in Butte); Sweetgrass 4; Yellowstone 8 (1 in Billings); total 89; total last month 100; total last January 49.

SCARLATINA—Cases of scarlet fever were reported as follows: Custer 12; Dawson 10; Deer Lodge 3 (in Anaconda); Flathead 1; Gallatin 12; Lewis and Clark 7 (in Helena); Madison 3; Meagher 8; Ravalli 3; Silver Bow 8 (6 in Butte); total 67; total last month 67; total last January 16.

MEASLES—Cases of Measles were reported as follows: Carbon 1; Deer Lodge 4 (in Anaconda); Lewis and Clark 1 (in Helena); Madison 3; Missoula 5 (3 in Missoula City); Park 2 (both in Livingston); Powell 1; Sanders 1; Silver Bow 1 (in Butte); Yellowstone 34 (19 in Billings); total 54; total last month 19; total last January 145.

TYPHOID FEVER—Cases of typhoid fever were reported as follows: Beaverhead 3; Carbon 15; Custer 1; Dawson 1; Fergus 3; Madison 2; Missoula 6 (all reported from city, but only one originated there); Powell 2; Ravalli 1; Silver Bow 1 (in Butte); Valley 1; total 36; total last month 27; total last January 10.

BIRTHS.

Births reported to the State Board of Health of Montana for
January, 1908, and comparative birth and death rate in State.

	Males.....	Females.....	Totals.....	Deaths.....	Excess of Births.....	Excess of Deaths.....		Males.....	Females.....	Totals.....	Deaths.....	Excess of Births.....	Excess of Deaths.....
Beaverhead.....	4	3	7	6	1	....	Madison.....	5	5	10	17	....	7
Broadwater.....	2	3	5	6	....	1	Meagher.....	1	1	2	5	....	3
Carbon.....	6	8	14	12	2	....	Missoula.....	17	15	32	44	....	12
Cascade.....	27	25	52	32	20	....	Park.....	11	13	24	16	8	....
Chouteau.....	13	3	16	12	4	....	Powell.....	3	1	4	9	....	5
Custer.....	5	1	6	10	....	4	Ravalli.....	12	12	24	12	12	....
Dawson.....	7	3	10	2	8	....	Rosebud.....	4	1	5	3	2	....
Deer Lodge.....	13	5	18	22	....	4	Sanders.....	3	....	3	8	....	5
Fergus.....	8	10	18	11	7	....	Silverbow.....	38	34	72	83	....	11
Flathead.....	19	17	36	19	17	....	Sweetgrass.....	5	2	7	1	6	....
Gallatin.....	14	7	21	12	9	....	Teton.....	3	3	6	1	5	....
Granite.....	4	....	4	7	....	3	Valley.....	2	3	5	5	....	....
Jefferson.....	3	7	10	13	....	3	Yellowstone.....	13	17	30	36	....	6
Lewis and Clark...	12	13	25	42	....	17	Totals.....	254	212	466	446	20	....

Births reported from Cities of 5,000 or more inhabitants.

Anaconda.....	13	5	18	3	....	....	Great Falls.....	12	10	22	13	....	9
Billings.....	8	13	21	30	....	9	Helena.....	10	12	22	32	....	10
Bozeman.....	6	3	9	6	3	....	Livingston.....	5	13	18	11	7	....
Butte.....	30	28	58	50	8	....	Missoula.....	12	7	19	24	....	5

MORTALITY

Deaths Reported to the State Board of Health for the Month of
January, 1908, Arranged According to Counties,

	Tuberculosis.....	Diphtheria.....	Scarlet Fever.....	Measles.....	Typhoid Fever....	Meningitis.....	Whooping-Cough..	Pneumonia.....	Nephritis.....	Organic Heart Disease	Malignant Tumors	Acute Intestinal Diseases.....	Violence.....	Suicide.....	Alcoholism.....	All other Causes..	Totals.....
Beaverhead.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	1	.....	.....	.....	.....	3	.....	.....	2	6
Broadwater.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	2	1	2	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	1	6
Carbon.....	3	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	4	.....	.....	.....	.....	2	.....	.....	3	12
Cascade.....	1	3	3	.....	1	.....	2	4	.....	1	.....	.....	2	.....	.....	15	32
Chouteau.....	2	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	2	.....	2	.....	1	.....	.....	.....	4	12
Custer.....	.....	1	.....	.....	1	.....	.....	3	2	1	.....	.....	1	.....	1	1	10
Dawson.....	.....	1	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	1	2
Deer Lodge.....	2	.....	.....	.....	.....	2	.....	4	1	2	.....	.....	1	.....	1	9	22
Fergus.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	1	.....	.....	2	.....	8	.....	.....	.....	11
Flathead.....	1	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	6	1	1	.....	.....	1	.....	1	6	19
Gallatin.....	1	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	1	1	.....	.....	1	.....	.....	8	12
Granite.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	1	1	.....	.....	.....	.....	3	1	7
Jefferson.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	3	.....	.....	.....	.....	1	.....	1	8	13
Lewis and Clark...	1	2	.....	.....	.....	1	.....	11	4	1	1	.....	5	1	1	14	42
Madison.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	1	.....	1	.....	2	1	1	4	1	.....	6	17
Meagher.....	1	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	1	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	1	2	5
Missoula.....	1	1	.....	.....	2	2	1	12	1	2	1	.....	6	.....	1	14	44
Park.....	1	1	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	5	.....	4	1	.....	.....	.....	.....	4	16
Powell.....	2	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	3	1	1	.....	.....	1	.....	.....	1	9
Ravalli.....	.....	.....	1	.....	.....	1	.....	2	1	3	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	4	12
Rosebud.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	1	.....	.....	.....	1	.....	.....	.....	1	3
Sanders.....	.....	1	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	1	.....	4	.....	.....	2	8
Silver Bow.....	7	1	2	.....	1	6	.....	14	5	9	2	.....	5	.....	3	28	83
Sweet Grass.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	1	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	1
Teton.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	1	1
Valley.....	1	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	1	.....	1	.....	.....	.....	.....	1	1	5
Yellowstone.....	.....	4	.....	2	3	.....	.....	10	1	4	2	.....	2	.....	.....	8	36
Totals.....	24	15	6	2	8	13	3	91	20	39	13	3	48	2	14	145	446

Deaths per 100,000; 159.28

Annual Death rate per 1,000; 19.11

Deaths reported from cities of 5,000 or more inhabitants

Anaconda.....	2	.....	.....	.....	.....	2	.....	2	1	2	.....	.....	1	.....	1	4	15
Billings.....	.....	2	.....	1	3	.....	.....	8	.....	4	2	.....	.....	.....	.....	8	30
Bozeman.....	1	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	3	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	4	6
Butte.....	1	1	2	.....	1	3	.....	10	4	3	3	.....	2	.....	2	18	50
Great Falls.....	1	.....	2	.....	1	.....	.....	3	.....	.....	.....	.....	2	.....	.....	4	13
Helena.....	1	2	.....	.....	1	.....	.....	9	4	1	1	.....	.....	1	1	11	32
Livingston.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	3	.....	4	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	4	11
Missoula.....	1	.....	.....	.....	1	1	1	11	1	1	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	6	24